

# FRANK READE



## WEEKLY MAGAZINE.

Containing Stories of Adventures on Land, Sea & in the Air.

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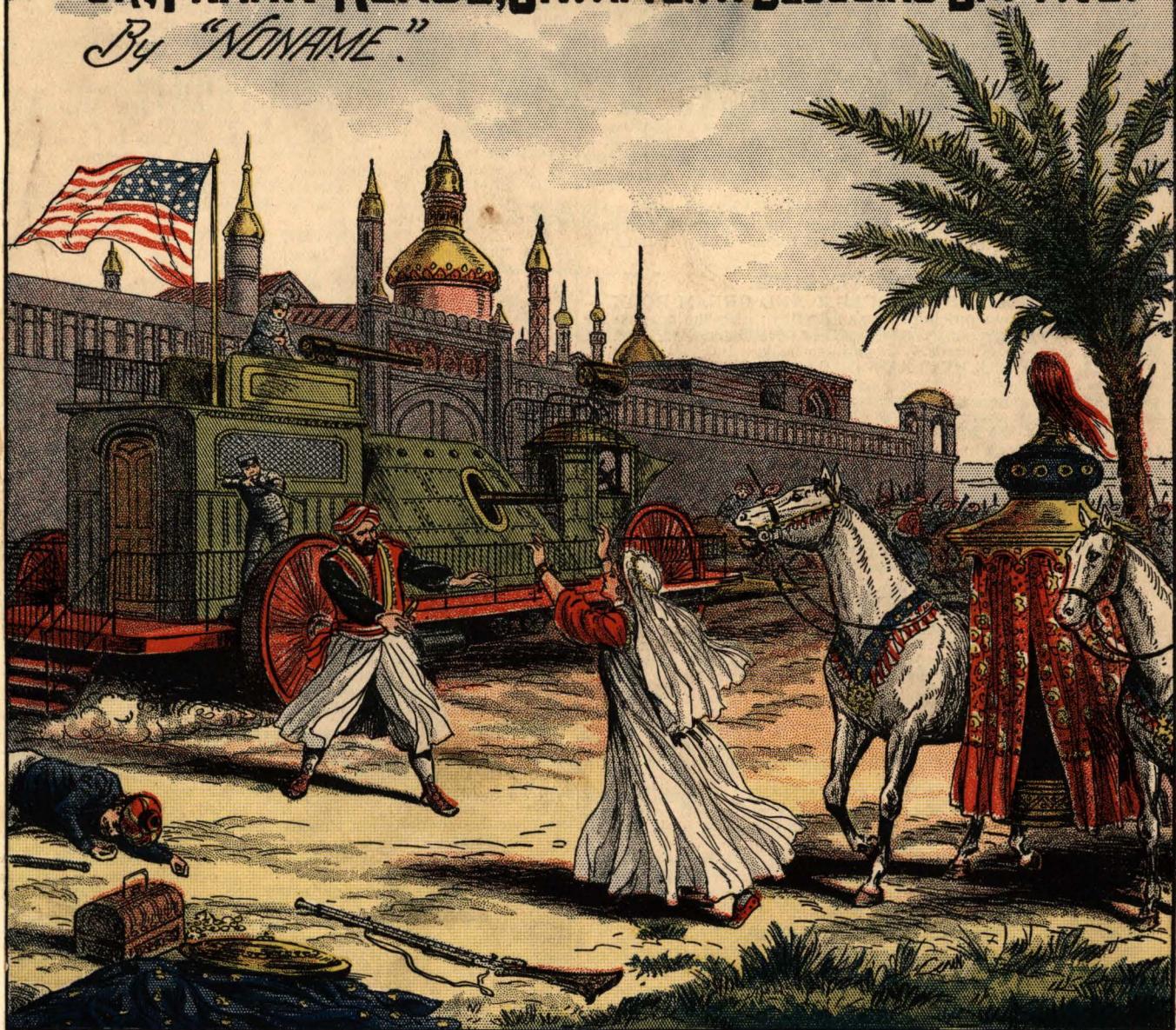
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NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 27, 1903.

Price 5 Cents.

## CHASED ACROSS THE SAHARA! OR, FRANK READE, JR. AFTER A BEDOUINS' CAPTIVE.

By "NONAME".



From a gaily-decked litter between two horses a light, feminine form sprang. It was Ethel herself and she started for the Cycle with outstretched arms. A Bedouin endeavored to get in her path, but a bullet from Barney's rifle settled his case.

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## CHASED ACROSS THE SAHARA;

OR,

### Frank Reade, Jr., After a Bedouins' Captive.

By "NONAME."

#### CHAPTER I.

IN THE DESERT.

"I am forced to the dreadful belief that we are indeed lost."

The speaker was a tall, military-appearing man, who was mounted upon a fine specimen of the Arabian mare.

His words were uttered involuntarily, but were heard by four other people who were no less agitated than himself.

The place was a boundless desert of sand.

Not a tree nor a green thing of any kind broke the sameness of the great Sahara.

The sun at noonday beat down with pitiless force upon the little party of six travelers.

Five they were of one nationality, and the sixth was an Arab guide who just now was vainly endeavoring to find a trail in the sand.

Or, at least, he pretended to be doing this, but ever and anon his keen black eyes would scan the party in an evilly triumphant manner.

Five Americans were in the party.

The first speaker with whose utterances we open this

story, was Gen. Abram Fitz, late of the United States army, and now retired.

At his right was a white-bearded man of bold features and deep, thoughtful eyes.

He was the renowned scientist of the Smithsonian Institute, Prof. Benjamin Tait.

Beside him was his daughter, Miss Ethel, a young girl of nineteen, and passionately devoted to her aged parent.

Two young men sat upon their horses at her side.

One was blonde and light of heart and speech. His name was Eben Strong, and he was a young Yale student.

The other was dark and earnest in manner, and a recent graduate of Harvard, by name Bertrand Vaile.

Certainly a strange party to be seen in the midst of the wild Sahara.

But their presence here is easily explained.

Prof. Tait had conceived the idea of research in the lower ruins of cities upon the borders of the Sahara.

Every man of the party was in this region in the interests of science and archaeology.

They expected to achieve great results and had been quite successful thus far.

Through the influence of ex-President U. S. Grant, who

was deeply revered by the people of the Orient, they had obtained a royal permit from the Sultan to visit any ruins in Egypt.

They had secured the services of an experienced guide, Ben Hassan, and with the consciousness of perfect safety under the protection of the Khedive's ukase, they had pushed their way recklessly into the very heart of the lower Sahara.

It was known that roving bands of Bedouins here found home.

They were a lawless crew, and ready to pounce upon any unsuspecting traveler.

But our explorers had deemed themselves safe.

Ben Hassan had shook his head and said, confidently:

"Never fear, Effendi, you are under the care of the great sultan."

A large ruin just in the verge of the Sahara had been explored, when Ben Hassan began to tell of a ruined city, which he said lay further to the west.

He described it as a place probably not visited in centuries by any save the Bedouins.

Prof. Tait caught the inspiration very quickly.

It looked to him as if he would be sure to hit upon a wonderful thing, and he at once accepted Hassan's offer to pilot them thither.

The start was made, and they struck out into the desert.

The first night out they had camped comfortably in a small oasis in the desert.

But the next day a sand storm came up and for a time it was an open question as to whether they could survive it or not.

When it finally subsided all trace of the trail had vanished.

Hassan, however, affirmed that he could find the way easily enough.

So the party pushed on.

Two days of toilsome traveling followed. Occasionally a small oasis was found where the horses were watered and fed.

But the desert seemed to grow wider and more desolate.

Moreover, Hassan seemed plunged into a strange mood.

He was nervous and restless and made little talk.

Gen. Fitz was the first to regard him with suspicion.

Finally, satisfied that the trail they were following was the wrong one, the general had questioned the guide sharply.

Hassan made confused and evasive replies.

Then the general drew in his horse and gave expression to the utterances with which our chapter opens:

"I believe we are lost!"

A dead silence for some moments followed this declaration.

Then Prof. Tait spoke:

"Have you questioned the guide, Gen. Fitz?" he asked.

"I have."

"What does he say?"

"Little or nothing. Either he is leading us astray, or he has lost his bearings."

"Most likely the latter," said Eben Strong. "Of course, Hassan is honest."

"I am not agreeing with you," said Bertrand Vaile, dubiously. "I tell you these Arabs are all rascals."

"But what would be his object in leading us out here?" asked Strong.

"That is not yet clear."

"No, you are right. I shall continue to have confidence in Hassan."

"You are at liberty to do so."

Ethel Tait had said nothing.

Her lovely dark-brown eyes burned with a peculiar light. There was no trace of fear in her manner.

"What shall be done?" asked Gen. Fitz in a despondent way.

"Why not turn back?" was Ethel's suggestion.

"Is it possible to do so?" asked Prof. Tait.

Fitz shook his head.

"I doubt it," he said. "The back trail must have been obliterated quite all by the sandstorm."

"Question Hassan again," suggested young Vaile. "Something must be done. It is no joke to become lost in this awful region."

"You are right, Bertrand," agreed Prof. Tait.

Hassan was signaled.

The fellow came up with an air of carelessness and indifference.

Gen. Fitz catechised him.

"Do you know where we are, Hassan?" he asked, bluntly. The fellow hung his head.

"We are in the desert, Effendi, and—and—"

"Well, what?"

"I fear that the storm—it has caused us to lose the path."

Gen. Fitz brought his hand down forcibly upon the pommel of his saddle.

"I knew it!" he cried forcibly. "It is no more than I expected. Friends, we are certainly lost."

Everybody looked sober.

All eyes were upon the guide, who evaded a direct gaze

and seemed to be very much ashamed or guilty, it was hard to tell which.

Prof. Tait was perhaps the coolest of any.

He cast a glance back over the desert and said :

"Well, we must make the best of it. I think I can really lead the way back myself."

"I fancy that is not easy!" declared Gen. Fitz, doubtfully.

"But I see no other way!"

Suddenly Hassan gave a sharp cry.

He bent down and groped in the sand a moment. This he continued for some moments.

Then he arose and made excited gesticulations of delight.

"Allah be praised!" he cried in the Turkish tongue. "I have found it, Effendi. I have found it!"

"Found what?"

Gen. Fitz spurred to the spot.

"The path, Effendi, the path!"

The words of the guide were like an electric shock to all. It seemed as if by magic the tables were turned and all was well again.

Perhaps the most delighted of all was Professor Tait.

"Are you really sure of it, Hassan?" he asked, excitedly.

"Surely, master."

With this the wily Arab pointed to camel tracks which he had espied in the sand.

This seemed to settle the question.

At once all in happier spirits pressed forward rapidly.

Hassan, in whom confidence seemed suddenly restored, led the way.

For several hours the party toiled on patiently.

Then suddenly Fitz raised himself in his saddle and shouted :

"Hurrah, an oasis!"

Indeed, the outlines of waving palms could be seen in the distance.

It looked as if the party were nearing an oasis.

But Hassan shook his head and said gravely :

"No, it is not so, Effendi. That is Colu-Kadel, the City of the Sun Prince."

"Colu-Kadel!" cried Prof. Tait, excitedly. "Hurrah! at last we have come to the Mecca of our hopes!"

The party pressed forward now eagerly.

The ruined walls of the city among waving palms could be seen presently.

But suddenly a strange thing happened.

Upon the distant plain a dark body was suddenly seen moving down toward them.

In their rear was another.

Eben Strong was the first to see them and he called attention to the fact.

Gen. Fitz produced his glass and studied them.

A cloud swept over his patrician face as he finally declared :

"It is a party of horsemen and as near as I can make out they are Bedouins."

This announcement created something of a sensation.

All watched with interest the approach of the Bedouins, but none dreamed of the fearful result of their coming upon the scene.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE BEDOUINS.

The Bedouin of the desert is commonly reputed to be the best horseman in the world, and to possess the best horses.

The Arab and his steed are figures in history and in romance.

Certainly, as they drew nearer, these Bedouins seemed to lack none of the characteristics of the genuine Arab.

They rode fiercely, were dressed outlandishly, and carried long-barreled rifles over their backs.

Down they came about the little party like a cloud.

Around and around them they circled at full speed.

Suddenly they halted in a body, and then one of them made comprehensive signals to Hassan.

The guide seemed at first to be afraid of the band.

But he recovered quickly, and turning to Prof. Tait, cried :

"Ah, Allah preserve us, Effendi! It is the Great Sheik, Ahmed Bey, and his followers."

"Who in the deuce is he?" cried Gen. Fitz, sharply. "Some Bedouin thief, I suppose!"

Hassan nodded in reply.

"Does he mean hostilities?"

"Wait, Effendi!" said the guide.

With which the fellow held up both palms of his hands.

This act was seen by the distant Bedouins, and one of them rode forward.

When about fifty yards distant he parleyed with Hassan in Arabic.

The guide presently turned to Gen. Fitz and said :

"It is the Sheik of Colu-Kadel. He asks backsheesh!"

"All right!" said the general, pulling out a few silver pieces.

All threw some silver into a kerchief, and this was given to the Bedouin.

He grasped it greedily and rode back to his fellows.

Loud shouts went up from the Bedouins, and they began firing their guns in the air.

Presently, back came the first truce bearer.

Again Hassan parleyed.

This time the guide turned and said:

"They want more backsheesh, Effendi."

"More!" exclaimed Gen. Fitz. "Well, I never saw an Arab that didn't want more."

Accordingly, believing it to be the best policy, more backsheesh was sent to the Bedouin chief.

Again the Bedouins yelled and fired their yataghans in the air.

Back came the messenger a third time.

This time Hassan repeated a sterner request.

"The great sheik, Ahmed Bey, wants the invaders of his country to send him their guns."

Gen. Fitz was very angry.

"You go tell the thieving, skulking dogs," he roared, "that we will give them the contents of our guns, and nothing more. Enough of this nonsense."

"Look to your weapons, everybody!" cried Prof. Tait, who saw that strife was almost certain.

Instinctively all gathered about Ethel.

The Bedouins outnumbered the party five to one.

That they would make an attack seemed very likely.

Indeed, the messenger now came back once more.

"The sheik Ahmed Bey sends back word," he cried, in Arabic, "that you must pay him tribute, as you are in his country."

"Yes, that is very nice!" replied Gen. Fitz, angrily, "but if we were to give up our guns in tribute we would be indeed in a nice box. Tell them, Hassan, that we travel under a ukase of the sultan."

"Ay, Effendi," replied the guide.

This word went back to Ahmed Bey, but the word came back most thrilling.

"Ahmed Bey recognizes no authority of the sultan. He is his own master in his own land and asks no leniency of the sultan, whom he rather defies!"

This settled the matter.

Not one in the party of explorers but knew that they had got to fight now.

To be sure it was a bleak outlook, but each man was determined and they would sell their lives dearly.

The Bedouins now opened fire upon the party.

One bullet cut a hole in Eben Strong's sleeve.

This called forth a lively response from the Americans.

Their repeating Winchesters were far superior to the guns of the Bedouins.

The battle waxed fierce and desperate.

For a time bullets whistled thick and fast.

Three of the Bedouins were shot.

Thus far the Americans had received only slight wounds. They seemed to have much the best of the conflict.

But the Bedouins began to draw nearer, and now Gen. Fitz saw reinforcements coming across the plain.

The grim old warrior knew what this meant.

Every one of the party would be murdered and their effects confiscated.

Something must be done and at once. It was folly to think of remaining longer where they were.

The general conferred with Prof. Tait.

The ruins of Colu-Kadel were some miles distant. To make a break for them might be successful.

It would certainly be a race for life. Once the ruins were reached, at least shelter could be gained, and this was something.

It required but a few moments for the explorers to make up their minds.

Then all mounted and the start was made.

Out across the sandy plain they went at good speed. Gen. Fitz brought up the rear, ever and anon turning in his saddle to fire at the foe.

Eben Strong held the bridle rein of Ethel's horse. Thus the mad race went on.

And after the party came the Arabs, yelling madly and firing their guns rapidly.

Fortunately the distance was so great that the bullets had little or no effect, being mostly spent before reaching the fleeing party.

Every moment the ruins of Colu-Kadel drew nearer.

If shelter could only be reached there was a chance that they might yet defeat the foe.

All this while the actions of Hassan had been most peculiar.

He had ridden some distance apart from the Americans, and once or twice Gen. Fitz thought he detected him making signals to the foe.

The general's confidence in Hassan had been greatly shaken.

He regarded him with the greatest of suspicion. Suddenly the guide let out a yell of great fierceness and diverged from the party entirely, firing a revolver at Gen. Fitz as he did so.

The dastardly shot took effect.

To the horror of everyone brave Fitz reeled in his saddle and fell.

Instantly everyone drew rein.

Strong and Prof. Tait dismounted and rushed to the side of the stricken man.

It needed but a glance at his drawn features to reveal the truth.

He was a dead man.

The horror and indignation of the party could not be expressed in words.

The treacherous guide was now far beyond rifle range.

He was seen to join the pursuing party. The truth was now plain. He had led the party into a dastardly trap.

"The miserable, murderous scoundrel," cried Bertrand Vaile. "He shall be punished for this foul work if I have to spend a lifetime upon his trail."

"We are victims of his fiendish plot!" cried the professor.

"Of course we are!"

Tenderly a blanket was thrown over the dead form of Gen. Fitz.

Then other matters of a most thrilling sort engrossed the attention of all.

The Bedouins were coming to the attack most fiercely.

Bullets came whistling about.

There was not time to remount.

Two of the horses fell dead. The others would not leave their comrades, and it was quickly decided to make a stand upon the spot.

This was a most desperate one.

All lay flat in the sand, and fired just as often as they could load. But the Bedouins were coming with such force that they fairly overwhelmed the little party.

In a few moments they were all the centre of a struggling mass.

Ethel was separated from her companions, and though she fought bravely, strong arms were thrown about her, and she was quickly made a prisoner.

In a twinkling several of the Bedouins had placed her upon a horse, and were riding away at full speed for Colu-Kadel.

Our adventurers saw this move, and it filled their breasts with horror.

"My God!" cried Strong, wildly, "they have got away with Ethel."

"Fight!" shrieked Bertrand Vaile. "We must beat them back and go to her rescue."

Madly they fought.

The result was that though they were covered with wounds they beat the Bedouins back.

Then horses were secured, from which the foe had been shot, and they mounted.

Then followed a running fight all the way to Colu-Kadel.

Fearful indeed was that running fight. At last the ruins were reached, and here darkness came on.

In the morning, after a long and watchful night, it was found that the Bedouins had gone.

The field was clear, and in one sense they were the victors.

But all were exhausted and wounded. Yet not one thought of giving up the search for Ethel.

For a week they scouted about the region, narrowly avoiding capture. Nothing was seen or heard of the young girl.

It was a hopeless, despairing quest.

In their limited numbers it was plain that they had little chance of effecting her rescue.

Prof. Tait was in despair.

"My God! must I give my darling child up?" he groaned. "What an awful fate!"

Eben Strong and Bertrand Vaile, both ardent admirers of Ethel, replied in chorus:

"Never, if we have to give up our lives, we will never leave the quest!"

But every day was one of greater peril.

It was evident that Sheik Ahmed had made up his mind to capture the three Americans.

They were put to their wits' end to avoid the Bedouins in a body. It was a game of hide-and-seek in the ruins of Colu-Kadel for a few days.

Then a strange thing happened.

One day Eben Strong climbed upon a section of crumbling wall to take a view of the vast Sahara, when he beheld an astounding sight.

He rubbed his eyes. Could he believe his senses? Out upon the plain, but a few hundred yards, was the most peculiar-looking invention he had ever seen.

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE ELECTRIC CYCLE.

"By the horn-spoon!" he cried, excitedly. "Come up here, Vaile. What do you call that out there?"

In a moment Bertrand was by his side.

Indeed, his amazement was not less than that of his friend.

"As I live, I never saw anything like that before," he gasped.

Indeed, it was a strange-looking machine which they beheld.

Or, rather, vehicle, for such it plainly was, for it had wheels, though there was no visible motive power.

In shape the strange vehicle was long, with a flat deck, railed in from one end to the other.

Forward there was a large wheel like that of a safety bicycle, and evidently rubber-tired the same.

In the rear were two wheels with broad tires, grooved, apparently, so that the vehicle could obtain a good purchase for propulsion.

Beneath the deck there were a series of cog-wheels and intricate machinery, evidently connected with the propelling power of the vehicle.

Above the platform or deck there were three structures.

One in the rear was square, with a window in the side of finest woven steel. A door opened from the rear to a landing, with railing and steps by which to alight.

Upon the top of this main cabin, for such it apparently was, there was a half-circular band of steel, joining with a rail in the rear.

Within this inclosure there was a long and slender gun, evidently of a new pattern, perhaps a pneumatic rifle.

A flag-pole carried two flags—the American flag, and below it a burgher, upon which was a white star and the initials F. R., Jr.

Just forward of this main cabin was a metal, shell-like structure, in which there were loopholes and two embrasures, from which peeped cannon of the character of the one above.

Forward of this was a tall tower-like structure, being evidently the pilot-house, for through its plate-glass bow window could be seen a steering wheel.

Upon the top of this was a railing and a platform, and a specimen of electric searchlight. This led the party to at once correctly guess that electricity was the motive power of the wonderful machine.

Forward was a long, steel ram, sharp as a needle, and upon the hubs of the rear wheels were sharp spikes.

This completes the outside description most imperfectly of the queer machine.

The two young students regarded it for a time in blankest amazement.

Then Professor Tait was called.

The machine was at a standstill near a small well in a clump of palms.

A tall, handsome young man, in a naval uniform, could be seen upon the deck.

On the ground and dipping water from the well were

two men. One a negro and the other plainly an out and out Irishman.

"What in the world do you call it?" cried Eben Strong, excitedly. "That fellow on deck looks like one of our countrymen."

Professor Tait gave a great shout of delight.

"And so he is!" he cried, wildly. "I know well what it means. He is Frank Reade, Jr., the greatest of inventors, and this is one of the wonderful machines with which he visits every part of the earth."

"Frank Reade, Jr.!" cried Vale. "Why, I have heard of him!"

"So have I!" agreed Strong. "Why did I not remember him!"

"We are in luck!" cried Tait.

"Why?"

"He will rescue Ethel for us!"

"How do you know that?"

"I know him too well. Frank Reade, Jr., is the friend of the defenseless and those in trouble or oppressed!"

The two students cheered.

"What has brought him to this part of the world?"

"Probably exploration!" replied Tait.

"But we had better go down and see him right away. He may start and leave us!"

"You are right!"

With this conclusion the three Americans started for the well.

But they had left their hiding place in the ruins only a moment, when from a crumbling temple a score of Bedouins came rushing out.

There were lively times for a few moments.

All made a break for cover.

The air was broken with the crack of rifles. Of course, this attracted the attention of those at the well.

In an instant the Irishman and the negro sprang aboard.

The machine started for the spot like a flash.

Into the littered street of the ruined city the machine dashed.

It required only a moment for the wonderful inventor to see the true state of affairs.

He saw three white men of his own nationality bravely fighting the Bedouins.

Instantly the electric gun was brought to bear upon the foe.

There was a flash of light, vivid as lightning, then a terrific explosion right in the midst of the Bedouin crew.

The effect was terrible.

The air was filled with flying debris, and a number of the wretches were hurled into eternity.

The others got out of the way in quick time.

In a few moments not a Bedouin was to be seen anywhere.

The three Americans were saved.

They were now not fifty yards from the wonderful machine, the like of which they had never seen before.

Forgotten for the moment was everything else in their admiration of the Electric Racing Cycle, for this was the name of the invention.

Almost instantly Frank Reade, Jr., himself sprang down from the deck of the Cycle and advanced toward them.

He was a tall, handsome and distinguished-looking young man.

The explorers had now collected their wits, and Professor Tait came forward, with a joyful smile and outstretched hand.

"If I mistake not I have the honor of addressing Frank Reade, Jr., the world's greatest inventor," said the professor, warmly.

"That is my name," replied the young inventor, modestly.

"I greet you, and we all wish to express our deep gratitude to you for the saving of our lives."

"I am very glad to be able to serve you," said Frank, "but," and his face assumed an expression of surprise, "whom have I the honor of meeting, and what are you doing in this out-of-the-way part of the world?"

"I am Professor Tait, of Washington, U. S. A.," replied Tait; "these are my friends and proteges in science. Mr. Vaile, of Harvard, and Mr. Strong, of Yale."

All shook hands, warmly, after this introduction.

Then Frank said:

"So you are in this region for scientific research?"

"Yes."

"You have good pluck. It is one of the most dangerous sections in the Sahara regions."

"Indeed we have discovered that fact to our sorrow!" replied Tait.

"The savage tribes which inhabit this lower part of the desert are most powerful and warlike."

"I presume we would not have ventured thus far had it not been for the treachery of our guide."

"Ah, I see!" cried Frank Reade, Jr., with comprehension. "Well, these Arabs are rascally fellows. Have you lost any of your party?"

"Yes," replied the professor, eagerly. "Let me tell you the story, Mr. Reade. I know that you will sympathize with us!"

"I have no doubt of it."

"We have lost two of our party. One, Gen. Fitz, a brave soul, is dead; the other, my dear daughter Ethel, is in the power of Ahmed Bey."

A quick exclamation escaped Frank Reade, Jr.'s lips.

"What!" he exclaimed, excitedly. "In the power of that wretch? My God! what a fate for an innocent, helpless young girl!"

Professor Tait gave a groan.

"You can imagine my feelings, Mr. Reade," he said.

"I can," replied the young inventor, "and from the bottom of my heart I sympathize with you. But do you not intend to make an effort to rescue her?"

"You are right, we do!" cried Eben Strong and Bertrand Vaile, in chorus. "We will rescue her or lay down our lives in this accursed region!"

"But what can we hope to accomplish against such odds?" groaned Tait.

Frank Reade, Jr.'s frame seemed to shake with a powerful emotion.

He placed one hand upon the professor's arm.

"My good sir," he replied, forcibly, "if such a thing is possible your daughter shall be rescued."

A joyful cry escaped the old man's lips.

"Heaven be praised!" he cried, wildly. "Then you will help us?"

"I will help you," replied the young inventor. "With my Racing Cycle I can chase Ahmed Bey from one end of this Sahara to the other."

Tait fairly embraced Frank.

"You will get your reward!" he cried, wildly. "Heaven will reward you. Oh, accept a bereaved father's blessing!"

"I have come to this part of the world from my native city of Readestown in quest of wild adventure!" cried Frank. "And here is something to my taste at once. Fear not, friend, we will punish the cowardly abductors well!"

The joy of all can hardly be expressed in words.

Plans were quickly made.

It was decided that the three scientists should turn their horses adrift and go aboard the Cycle.

This was done.

Once on board the wonderful invention they were wonder-struck with its details of construction.

Frank showed them through the richly furnished cabin, into the gun-room and to the dynamo-room and finally to the pilot-house.

Everything was magnificent in appointment and conception.

Then Frank introduced them to Barney and Pomp.

The darky grinned and ducked his head in a comical manner, saying:

"I'se done glad fo' to meet yo', gemmens."

The Celt pulled off his cap and broadened his comical Irish mug.

"Begorra, it's wilcome to the Cycle yez are, frinds," he said, warmly.

In a few moments all were warm friends, and then the day began to draw to its close and darkness shut down over all the desert.

Frank Reade, Jr., went forward upon the little deck over the pilot-house and turned on the searchlight.

Its glare lit up the desert as plain as day for a distance of miles.

Some discussion was held and it was decided not feasible to continue the search until the next day.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### A PRACTICAL JOKE AND ITS RESULT.

Barney and Pomp were faithful servitors of Frank Reade, Jr.

They had accompanied him upon all his wonderful tours. Comical fellows they were.

It was hard to tell which had the richest vein of humor.

They were the warmest of friends and yet mutual hectors, each playing practical jokes upon the other at every available opportunity.

Now that darkness had settled down and it was decided to spend the night upon the spot, they proceeded to furnish a fund of entertainment.

And none could be more capable.

Pomp brought out his banjo and sang plantation songs.

Barney produced his Irish fiddle and gave wonderful selections upon it.

They danced and played and sang half the night away, amid the plaudits of the listeners.

Thus the hours passed away gaily until bedtime came.

Then all turned in save Pomp, who was watch for the first half of the night.

A few days previous Barney had suffered from one of Pomp's pranks.

He had been planning ever since to pay him back.

He now believed that the opportunity had come.

Pomp suspected nothing.

He paced the deck above in his faithful vigil.

Every dark shadow about the Cycle was brought under his careful scrutiny.

He did not intend to be surprised if he could help it.

The Celt knew that the darky was intensely superstitious.

Nothing was better calculated to stir up the element of fear in Pomp's composition than a genuine "ghostis," as he was wont to call a supernatural thing.

The Celt abstracted a white sheet from his bunk.

This he carefully measured, and then daubed fantastic figures upon it with liquid phosphorus.

Donning this, which, in the dark, gleamed ghost-like and unearthly enough, he made his face chalky white.

A tall white cap concluded the outfit.

Barney surveyed himself in a mirror and chuckled.

"Bejabers, I'll faix the naygur this toime," he cried, gleefully. "He'll niver thry to play any more jokes on me, be sure!"

Indeed he was a most frightful-looking object.

The lights from the phosphorus in the darkness were weird and fitful.

Thus equipped, Barney sat down in his stateroom to wait for the proper time to act.

The footsteps of Pomp on the deck above could be plainly heard.

The Celt shrewdly waited for the right moment.

It was an hour or so past midnight.

Then he cautiously stole out of the cabin and through the rear door of the Cycle.

Pomp's beat was a complete circuit of the deck along the line of the rail from the pilot-house in front, to the cabin at the rear.

So the Celt emerged and then noiselessly ran along the deck until close in the rear of the darky.

The Celt was not four feet behind the unsuspecting Pomp when he stretched up long white arms and gave a sepulchral groan.

The effect was thrilling.

Pomp instantly turned, and, if possible, his blood must have congealed in his veins.

For one instant he cowered, appalled, before the awful apparition.

Then with a yell of terror, which went far into the night, he gave a mad leap over the rail.

He struck the sand of the desert, and away he went in the direction of Colu-Kadel.

The terrified darky really had no idea of what he was doing.

For a while he was insane with superstitious terror.

He was firmly convinced that disembodied spirits were after him.

Terror of the wildest sort held its grip upon him.

On he rushed, madly, never daring to look behind or to stop, for fear that the "ghostis" would grab him.

When he did stop it was to fall from sheer over-exertion.

Barney, on the deck of the Cycle was in paroxysms of laughter.

He had never dreamed of his game working so well.

He had hoped to get the darky upon his knees and make him beg for mercy.

But Pomp had vanished in the gloom and nothing was to be seen or heard of him.

After the first comical aspect of the case had worn away, the serious part of it became manifest.

He knew not to what fate Pomp might rush.

In that direction the Bedouins were supposed to be hovering about.

If Pomp should happen to rush among them the result would be serious.

Barney was sobered.

"Bejabers, that'll niver do!" he muttered. "Shure, an' I'll have to foind the naygur an' bring him back!"

So the impetuous Celt quickly threw off his ghostly garments.

Over the rail he went, and in pursuit of Pomp.

He did not stop to think of the danger of leaving the Cycle unguarded.

He hoped to find the darky very quickly and bring him back.

Meanwhile Pomp had reached the very ruins of Colu-Kadel and sank exhausted in the sand.

He covered his face with his hands and tremblingly awaited the claw-like talons of the supposed ghost.

But when nothing of the kind materialized he began to recover his senses, and finally ventured to lift his head and look about him.

All was darkness.

The ruins of Colu-Kadel before him were outlined against the sky.

But not a ghost was in sight.

Pomp took courage.

He regained his feet.

Presently his courage and good sense returned.

"Fo' de Lor' sakes," he muttered, scratching his wool, "does yo' s'pose I make any mistake? I done fought I see ghostis fo' suah. Dar, I hab done gwine an' lef' de Cycle all unguarded, an' fo' all I know Marse Frank an' all ob dem may be massycreed. I was suah dat I saw dat ghostis jes de same."

The darky now began to think of returning.

He was partly convinced that he had been the victim of an optical delusion.

It was his part now to get back to the Cycle at once.

Realizing this he at once started.

But he had not taken a dozen steps when forms seemed to rise from the ground about him.

He halted in terror.

What did it mean?

Who were they?

He guessed, quickly enough.

That they were Bedouins there was little doubt.

"Golly fo' glory!" gasped the terrified darky, with clattering teeth. "Dis chile am done clean busted dis time fo' suah. I wondah if I eber git out ob dis, anyway?"

Loud cries, in an outlandish tongue, filled the air.

The Bedouins were closing in upon Pomp.

The darky knew that he had got to either surrender or take desperate chances.

He decided upon the latter.

He was far from being a coward, and in a contingency of this kind could fight like a lion.

So he let out a yell which would have done honor to a Comanche Indian and started for the foe.

Two stalwart Arabs were in his path, with lances lowered.

They launched excited exclamations at him, but Pomp did not heed them.

It was evidently their purpose to catch the darky alive. But Pomp had serious objections to this.

He made a tremendous dive right under the lance of the first Arab.

Another wild, blood-curdling yell escaped his lips.

He did not attempt to strike the barbarian with his fist, nor to wrestle with him.

This was not in accordance with African tactics.

A darky's best and most natural weapon of defense is his head.

Pomp had a phenomenally thick skull, and he drove it full force into the pit of the Arab's stomach.

The effect was curious.

This was such an unusual mode of attack that the fellow was taken unawares.

He was lifted from his feet as if launched from a catapult and struck the ground in a tremendous heap, some yards away.

As for Pomp, he plunged clean over his victim, turned a couple of somersaults and plunged his head into the abdomen of another Arab.

Down went the fellow as if struck by an avalanche.

The Bedouins were all about Pomp, but the darky dodged

them with incredible swiftness and reached an angle of the city wall.

Such terrific work astounded the Bedouins.

They lost their heads and began firing their long-barreled guns.

The bullets whistled all about Pomp, but fortunately none of them struck him.

He managed to get behind the wall and was for a moment safe.

He was never able afterwards to explain how he made his phenomenal escape.

But that he did, was a certain fact.

He dodged into the deeper shadows and ran along the wall.

He heard voices ahead, and suddenly paused.

An examination of the wall showed a deep niche.

He crawled into it, and to his surprise found winding stairs of stone.

Up these he rushed until he came into the open air.

He was upon the summit of the city wall, and he could plainly hear the uproar below.

Torches were flashing in the murky air, and the Bedouins were rushing hither and thither.

Their camp was not one hundred yards distant.

Pomp's position was seemingly one of only temporary security.

It seemed certain that the Bedouins must find him, and when they should do so his fate would, indeed, be an awful one. But the darky did not lose courage.

## CHAPTER V.

### A CAPTURE.

The Cycle had been left entirely without a guard.

Barney had not stopped to think of this in his excitement.

The result was somewhat peculiar.

The Celt had barely vanished in the gloom when a couple of dark forms crept out of the gloom.

Slowly they crept toward the Cycle.

When at the rail, one of them climbed up the steps in the rear.

The cabin door was open.

An electric light revealed the interior.

The Bedouin took it in with a curious interest. Then he made action.

He turned and executed a series of signals.

Boldly from the gloom there now advanced a large number of the Arabs.

Foremost was the tall form of Ahmed Bey.

It was evident that the Arabs believed that they had sprung a surprise upon their foes. But the end was not yet.

Barney at this moment was far out on the desert.

Somewhat singularly, none of the Bedouins had attempted to chase him.

Their whole interest seemed to be centered in the Cycle.

One after another crept aboard of the machine. Ahmed Bey stationed his men all about the Cycle.

Some were at the rear and some in front. It was with the idea of preventing the escape of the occupants.

Then the Arab sheik and two of his followers invaded the cabin.

They stole cautiously into the place.

The sleeping inmates were forward of the main cabin in separate staterooms. Some chance led the Arab sheik first into the engine-room.

This was a small apartment next to the gun-room, and barely large enough to admit two persons.

But here was the electrical machinery in all its intricacy and beauty. The Arabs gazed upon it with wonder.

The little dynamo wheel which operated the searchlight was buzzing rapidly.

Ahmed Bey regarded it with most intense curiosity.

Inadvertently he placed a hand upon one of the induction coils.

The result was thrilling.

He was hurled backward with the force of a stone from a catapult.

When he ceased turning somersaults he was near the cabin door in a heap. There he lay for a moment, dazed.

In his passage he had come in contact with a wire which pulled an electric alarm bell.

In a moment this began ringing furiously. Of course, the sleeping occupants were at once aroused.

Frank Reade, Jr., was on his feet in an instant.

It needed but a glance through his stateroom door to see the forms of the Bedouins in the cabin beyond.

He realized the situation with most awful horror.

It seemed to him that the Bedouins must have killed Pomp in order to get aboard the Cycle.

He could account for their presence there in no other way, for he knew that Pomp was a faithful sentry.

Quick action must be made.

He realized this.

Professor Tait, Eben Strong and Vaile were also aroused, and the latter came rushing out.

By this time Ahmed Bey had regained his feet, and at sight of Bertrand, fired at him.

The bullet missed Bertrand's head by an inch, and crashed into the crockery shelves in the apartment beyond.

But Frank Reade, Jr., acted just in time.

He saw the situation quickly.

He knew that it was necessary to act with dispatch.

In his stateroom there were all manner of electric keys connecting with every part of the Cycle.

He instantly opened a key which caused every window and door to close and lock securely.

This shut Ahmed Bey and two of his followers in the cabin.

Their comrades outside could not reach them.

They were entrapped.

The very moment that the villain realized this he cowed down like a whipped cur and began to beg for his life.

The voyagers all rushed out into the cabin with revolvers, and forced the three Bedouins to surrender.

Quick as a flash Frank produced manacles and they were secured.

Without, the other Bedouins by the score were pounding upon the steel shell of the Cycle and trying to force an entrance.

"Where is Pomp and Barney?" cried Professor Tait.

Frank would have asked the same question. The two faithful servitors were not in sight.

What had become of them?

All exchanged startled glances.

At that moment it was impossible to form any logical conclusion.

There were pressing exigencies which demanded immediate attention, and to these the party first gave heed.

There was a certainty that the Bedouins on the outside would do the machine harm if not driven away.

Frank Reade, Jr., in building the Cycle, had provided for just such an exigency as this.

The interior of the Cycle was separated from the outside steel shell by a sheet of rubber.

This acted as an insulator, and the outer shell was connected by wires with the dynamos.

It required but a touch to send the current into the shell.

Frank pressed a key, which did this.

The result was thrilling.

The Bedouins were hurled from the platform and deck like puppets.

Many of them were shocked into insensibility.

Then Frank opened the lever which connected with the running gear, and let the machine run ahead for some distance.

The Bedouins came yelling after, but did not venture to climb again upon the Cycle's platform.

This accomplished, Frank now gave his attention to his prisoners.

They were at first inclined to be surly and non-communicative.

But Frank knew of an admirable plan to overcome this.

He produced an electric wire, one touch of which caused the rebellious captives to unloose their tongues.

Ahmed Bey indeed became quite communicative.

He could converse in broken French, so Frank was enabled to carry on a conversation with him.

The young inventor learned with some relief that the Arabs had not killed either Barney or Pomp.

Where they were was a mystery yet to be solved.

The young inventor now asked about Ethel. The sheik was at first silent.

The electric wire, however, brought a response in quick time.

"Sacre! no do it again!" wailed the agonized Arab. "Me tell you everything. Girl in cave in hills beyond Colu-Kadel. Go to Twin Pyramids and then to east. Find girl with Cozia Hassan."

"You black scoundrel!" gritted Professor Tait. "If she is not returned safely to us you shall die!"

"He ought to be drawn and quartered!" declared Eben Strong.

"Hang him up by the heels!" gritted Bertrand Vaile.

The sheik trembled like an aspen. He clutched his long beard, spasmodically, and made reply:

"Spare me, Effendi! I swear by the beard of the prophet that you shall see the girl alive and well!"

"Will you see her placed safely in our hands?" asked Frank.

"Yes, yes, Effendi!"

"If you show treachery you shall die. I can blow your people all to powder with my big guns."

"I swear it, Effendi!"

"When daylight comes you shall show us the way."

The sheik bowed.

"It shall be done," he said.

Then he was left alone.

A consultation was held.

It was yet a mystery what had become of Barney and Pomp.

Frank felt that it was now his first duty to learn their fate.

So he went into the pilot-house and sent the searchlight flashing over the surface of the desert.

A group of jackals scurried away before its brilliancy.

Bedouins were seen in groups, but not a sign of the two servitors.

Even their bodies, if dead, were not to be seen as they might have been had such been the case.

The young inventor was puzzled.

"They must have left the Cycle!" he declared. "It is very strange, for it is a most unusual thing for them to do."

He decided to take a long, wide circle over the desert and make an extended search.

This the Cycle did.

But for some while there was not satisfactory results.

Then the Cycle drew near to the ruined walls of Colu-Kadel.

And here a sudden, startling scene was revealed.

Professor Tait was by Frank's side in the pilot-house.

"Look!" he cried, wildly, pointing into the gloom. "What is that?"

It was a thrilling scene.

One man seemed to be struggling in the clutches of half a dozen.

It was a terrible hand-to-hand fight.

Frank turned the searchlight full in that direction.

Then a great cry went up from all.

Barney's white face was plainly revealed to Frank. The Celt was fighting desperately with the Bedouins.

The Cycle ran forward at full speed.

None dared to fire for fear of hitting Barney. But as luck had it, just at that moment the Bedouins, in seeming terror, fled.

Barney came rushing toward the Cycle.

The next moment he leaped upon the platform and then was admitted to the cabin.

"Barney!" exclaimed Frank, in amazement. "What is the meaning of all this?"

"Shure, sor, it's me own divility as did it all."

Then he narrated the whole affair of the ghost joke upon Pomp to his employer.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE LIONS.

"Shure, sor, divil a bit."

"This is a pretty state of affairs. The desert about here is thickly infested with these Bedouins. For aught we knew he has been killed by them."

"Och, hone, sor, an' don't say that!" cried the Celt, in the wildest of alarm.

"It is probable."

"Oh, sor, if yez will only let me, shure, I'll go out an' I'll niver come back without the naygur."

"No!" said Frank, sternly. "You will stay aboard the Cycle."

And so the matter was decided.

All the remainder of the night the Cycle roamed about the ruined city in quest of the darky.

But not a trace of him could be found.

When daylight came the quest was renewed, but with no better effect.

At length there was offered no other alternative but to abandon it.

Of course, Frank was loth to do this.

But there were many other important things to consider.

Ethel Tait was in the power of Cozia Hassan, the Bedouin prince.

By Ahmed Bey's description, he was the master of a large following, who dwelt in tents and roamed about from place to place, over the Sahara.

There was no other way but to give chase to Cozia Hassan and his lawless crew of Arabs.

There was no doubt but that he considered Ethel a rich prize.

Ahmed declared that he would either hold her for ransom or make her a member of his harem.

He already had several hundred of these, but an extra one was always welcome.

"The wretch!" exclaimed Frank. "I'll give him ransom when I see him! I reckon he'll never trouble any more American girls."

Ahmed Bey promised faithfully to direct the young inventor so that he could surely find Cozia and his band.

"I swear it by the beard of the prophet!" he declared, which seemed to be the commonest oath used by the Arabs.

The Cycle was at once started for the Twin Pyramids.

These were distant some twenty miles, and from Colu-Kadel they were easily seen with a powerful glass.

Twenty miles could be run by the Cycle in a very brief time.

One hour would place them at the very base of the pyramids.

So Frank let the Cycle run at full speed.

Frank was by no means pleased with Barney's conduct.

"This skylarking must be stopped!" he cried, angrily.

"Have you any idea where Pomp is now?"

The ruins of Colu-Kadel were left behind in a short while.

Every moment now the Twin Pyramids loomed up nearer.

Soon their mighty proportions were revealed against the sky.

To the eastward of these pyramids were hills, and in these Cozia Hassan was at present located.

These hills were a dozen in number, being little more than large mounds.

They had once been the veneration of that part of Egypt, for in them were the Tombs of Kings.

As they drew nearer the great pyramids an incident of peculiar sort occurred.

Frank Reade, Jr., and Professor Tait were in the pilot-house.

Suddenly the professor cried:

"Upon my word! What do you call that, Mr. Reade?"

Frank looked in the direction indicated and gave an exclamation.

"Lions!" he exclaimed. "There are three of them, and they are feeding upon something."

"What can it be?"

"My God! It is the form of a man!"

"You are right."

"Just beyond him is his horse. They doubtless pounced upon him as he was riding across the desert."

"Without a doubt. How horrible!"

The two men gazed with horror at the scene.

Finally Frank's repugnance was so thoroughly aroused that he exclaimed:

"I say, Tait, just hold the wheel a moment."

"All right."

Frank darted out of the pilot-house, along the platform and reached the stairs leading up to the deck above the cabin.

Here he came upon the wonderful electric gun, an invention of his own.

"I will fix the brutes!" he muttered, as he sighted the gun.

At that moment one of the lions started to run in front of the machine.

Frank drew quick aim and pressed an electric key.

There was a hissing sound, a quick recoil and a projectile went whizzing through the air.

It did not strike the lion, but the ground under him.

There was an uprising column of sand visible a moment, an earthquake-like shock and the lion disappeared.

When the dust settled he was not to be seen anywhere.

There was a great hollow in the ground, and a mound of sand fully ten feet high.

That the brute was buried beneath this there was no doubt.

It was a swift and summary ending of the monster's career.

The other lions had stood their ground, roaring savagely at the newcomer.

Frank smiled and drew a bead on them.

There was another recoil. The distance was some quarter of a mile, but the aim was true.

The projectile struck the ground in front of the lions.

It exploded with terrific force.

When the smoke and dust cleared away the shattered remains of one was seen fully fifty yards from the spot. The other was completely buried.

Frank went down to the pilot-house.

All of the voyagers were excitedly gathered.

"On my word, Mr. Reade!" cried Professor Tait, "your electric gun is something marvelous. There is nothing in the possession of our government like it."

"Nor any other government," ventured Eben Strong.

"No, I think not," said Frank. "It is a deadly weapon. But before we go further, let us take a look at the man whom the lions destroyed."

The Cycle was stopped and all alighted.

The result was thrilling.

The victim of the lions' fury was torn literally to pieces.

He was an Arab; evidently, by his dress, and had been well armed.

But his weapons had availed him little before the fury of the lions.

His body was distributed in parts, but some vestige of his raiment were left.

Suddenly Barney gave an exclamation of surprise.

He picked up an object.

It was a roll of paper.

"Shure, sor, phwat is this?" he asked Frank, in surprise.

The young inventor took it.

There was a silken string about it, and as he untied it the roll fell apart.

Frank gave a start.

It was a peculiarly written map, apparently of some underground structure.

Upon the top of it was written a sentence in Turkish characters.

Frank was fairly familiar with these, and read them as follows:

"Mustapha Bey. A plan of the Twin Pyramids and the Treasure Chambers of Mahomet Ali. Key to the Inner Court. Drawn in the Turkish year 544. Blessed be Allah!"

Frank stood for a moment like one in a spell.

He comprehended in an instant the meaning of the document.

It meant that they were in the great pyramid's crypts, or chambers in which treasures had been deposited years and even centuries ago.

This may was a copy from some old roll of Turkish vellum.

Undoubtedly the man torn to pieces by the lions was Mustapha Bey.

He had been on his way to search for the treasure.

Putting all this together, Frank saw the truth at once, and naturally was at once interested.

The others had stood by, more or less curious as to the meaning of all.

Frank turned now and said:

"Professor Tait, you are familiar with Turkish characters are you not?"

"I am, somewhat," replied the professor.

"Please to read this, then."

Tait did so.

He studied the map a moment, and a great light shone in his eyes.

"Mercy on us!" he cried, excitedly, "Here is the most wonderful discovery yet made in Egypt or the Sahara. Why, this is the key to vast treasures!"

The others listened, dumfounded.

"You don't mean it!" gasped Eben Strong.

"Wonderful!" exclaimed Vaile.

"But it is true!" affirmed Tait. "And all lies beneath those Twin Pyramids which you see before you."

Barney turned a handspring in the sand and cried:

"Oh, bejabers, av the naygur was here now I'd be the happiest omadhaun on the earth!"

The first and natural impulse of all was to go at once about the exploration of the pyramids.

But Professor Tait suddenly remembered his darling Ethel, and the peril in which she was.

"Oh, if only my darling was here now!" he cried. "I could thank God from the bottom of my heart!"

"We will first rescue her!" cried Frank; "then we will return and search for the treasure."

"Oh, Mr. Reade, you are a good and kind friend in this, my extremity!"

"I am only too well pleased to give you aid," said Frank, warmly.

The young inventor rolled up the treasure map and carefully tied it.

Certainly here was a wonderful circumstance. That the key to the treasure should fall into their hands in such a peculiar manner was indeed strange.

All turned now to return to the Cycle.

The machine had been left quite alone, but the electric brakes were on and it could not move.

Suddenly Eben Strong cried:

"Look! What is that?"

Just vanishing around the corner of the distant pyramid were three human forms.

That they were Arabs was certain.

Moreover, to Barney them seemed familiar. With an exclamation the Irishman started for the Cycle.

The others followed at his heels.

A glance into the cabin was enough. In some mysterious manner Ahmed Bey and his two companions had freed their bonds and made good their escape.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE SAND STORM.

But meanwhile what of Pomp?

We left the terrified darky on the summit of the ruined city wall of Colu-Kadel.

Below he could see the lights of the Bedouin camp.

He knew that the rascals were everywhere looking for him.

Pomp was a shrewd fellow.

He had no idea of falling into the clutches of the Bedouins if he could help it.

He crouched upon the ruined wall for some while.

Suddenly he became conscious that the Bedouins had discovered the niche and the stairs by which he ascended.

This was enough for the darky.

He knew that he had got to change his quarters at once.

The manner in which he proceeded to do this was a risky one.

He crept noiselessly along the wall.

Suddenly it terminated.

Here was a wide break, fully a hundred feet in width.

He could hardly hope to cross that with a leap. There was but one course, and this was to clamber down.

There was, fortunately, not a Bedouin in sight. He leaned over the edge of the wall and looked down. All was darkness below.

Suddenly the edge of the wall crumbled; he made a spasmodic effort to save himself, and shot downward. For an instant he feared that his end had come. He expected to suffer broken bones on stones below. But instead he fell into a heap of sand.

Pomp was on his feet in an instant, and glided away into the gloom.

He took what he believed was the necessary direction to lead him back to the Cycle.

But, unfortunately, it was in an exactly opposite direction.

He stumbled on through everlasting sand for hours. In vain he looked for the lights of the Cycle. His efforts were unrewarded.

At length from sheer exhaustion he sank down into the sand.

He slept like a log for hours.

When he awoke the sun was hours high, and beating down upon him with most pitiless force.

Pomp arose and looked about him. Not a sign of life was visible.

There were the ruins of Colu-Kadel in the distance, but not a Bedouin was about them.

Evidently the Arabs had folded their tents and stolen away before dawn. They had certainly departed.

Neither was the Cycle in sight.

However, Pomp saw the wheel tracks of the machine in the sand near him. Filled with hope, he at once undertook to follow them.

They led straight away from Colu-Kadel. It was hard walking, but the brave darky kept on.

Twenty miles in those fearful sands was a long journey. When suddenly the pyramids came in view, Pomp believed his journey's end near.

But when the sandy plain lay before him and all about the pyramids devoid of any appearance of human life, he was not a little discouraged.

"Golly sakes!" he muttered. "I done fo't I wuz gwine fo' to see de Cycle here fo' suah. It am nowhere in sight so far as I can see!"

Pomp was tired and hungry.

He presently came to the remains of the lions and their victim. The wheel tracks and the work of the dynamite bomb were here plainly visible.

The trail of the Cycle, however, here struck out toward the distant hills.

Pomp wiped the sweat from his brow.

"Glory!" he muttered. "I wondah wha'ebber Marse Frank do ober yender? I done fink dis darky's goose am cooked fo' suah!"

However, there seemed no other way for the darky but to follow the trail.

This he proceeded to do.

It was easy to follow the wheel tracks of the Cycle.

For hours Pomp kept on.

The hills drew nearer.

But they seemed yet a long way off, and the darky was exhausted.

The terrible heat of the sun was something almost beyond endurance.

It did not seem as if he could possibly stand it.

At length he came to a dead stop.

His brain reeled and everything was the color of fire about him.

It was likely that the darky might at that moment have succumbed to the deadly rays of the sun had it not been for an incident.

A sudden breath of wind swept across the desert.

It caught up little windrows of fine sand, but it was cooling and like an elixir of life to Pomp.

The darky was instantly freshened and revived.

Brief as the blast was it gave him new strength.

He overcame the feeling of faintness upon him. But he did not attempt to push ahead.

He realized the prime necessity of recuperation.

But now a new and startling feature presented itself.

The gust of wind was not without its due meaning.

This quickly became apparent.

A huge yellow cloud had arisen from the horizon as if by magic.

It traveled rapidly up to the zenith.

In a comparatively short space of time the sun was obscured, and a dull, moaning sound seemed to come from the distance.

Pomp was familiar enough with the peculiarities of the region to know what this meant.

It was a precursor of the deadly simoon.

There is no storm in any part of the world more to be dreaded than this.

Arising with fearful rapidity, it assumes the character of a vast whirlwind of hot, suffocating air and blinding sand.

Woe to the unlucky caravan or single traveler that it overtakes.

Few could survive its deadly breath.

Pomp knew this well.

Involuntarily he gave himself up for lost.

"Glory fo' goodness!" he gasped. "Dis am suah 'nuff a gone coon dis time. Wha'ebber will I do?"

Instinctively the darky thought of burrowing in the sand.

He covered his head with the folds of his jacket and turned his back to the blast.

With pitiless force it came on.

The first breath was cool and sent an invigorating thrill through Pomp's being.

But the next was different.

It seemed as if all the fiends of the infernal regions were loosed at that moment and were disporting themselves over the desert.

Round the darky's crouching form howled the blast.

Great hurling masses of sand swept past, and with the keenness of knives cut his clothing in shreds.

He was bleeding in a hundred places from the cutting blast. With difficulty he caught his breath in gasps.

How long he was treated thus he could not guess.

But it seemed ages.

Suddenly a blast more terrific than any came.

The darky was lifted like a ball of cotton and whirled through the air for many rods.

He received many bumps and bruises, but suddenly came to a stop in a heap of sand.

For a few moments he was rendered dazed and breathless, but he quickly recovered himself.

All was quiet about him.

The storm was over.

Into the distance the rolling cloud of sand was receding.

Pomp had lived through the experience, and was practically uninjured.

For this he was duly thankful.

To be sure, there was but little clothing left upon him.

But a cooling breeze was blowing, and revived him greatly.

This acted as a tonic upon his exhausted frame, for which he was duly grateful.

More than this; an incident occurred of which he did not fail to take advantage, and which was to his interests.

He was watching the retreating wave of sand and wind, when suddenly from it there burst an Arabian horse, all saddled and bridled.

But the saddle was empty, and the horse came galloping toward Pomp at full speed.

The rider had doubtless been unhorsed by the storm.

For aught Pomp knew, he might have succumbed to it. This mattered not to the darky.

He saw an opportunity to better his fate, and he was not slow to seize it.

The Arabian steed came directly toward him.

Its brute instinct might have taught it to do this, or it might have mistaken Pomp for its master.

However this was, the horse came right up to Pomp.

The delighted darky caught its bridle and held the rein firmly.

"Golly, dis am a bit ob good luck!" he cried. "I jes' fink dis chile gwine to be a'right now."

To the saddle Pomp saw there were a couple of capacious bags.

He opened these and found in one a flask of pure water; in the other some scraps of meat and bread.

The darky took a draught of the water and partook of some of the bread.

That he felt better was a certain fact.

Indeed, so rejuvenated was he that he actually indulged in a double shuffle there in the sands of the desert.

Then he vaulted into the saddle and headed the horse for the hills.

He had no trail to follow now.

The simoon had obliterated this.

It was all a matter of luck and chance now whether he found the Cycle or not. He hoped to succeed.

Soon he was among the foothills.

There was some growth of palms, fertile valleys and rocky slopes.

Pomp rode on cautiously for he knew not what moment he might run across his Arab foes.

He kept a constant lookout for the Cycle.

But so far not a trace of it could he find. Fate, however, directed his course.

Coming out suddenly upon the brow of a precipice which was overhung with palms, he glanced down through the foliage and beheld a stunning sight.

There was an Arab encampment.

It covered acres, the tents being many hundreds in number. The tribe was a powerful one, and almost the first Arab Pomp saw from his position was the treacherous guide, Ben Hassan. The darky knew that he had hit upon the retreat of Cozia Hassan.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### UNDER THE PYRAMID.

The discomfiture of all at the discovery of Ahmed Bey's escape can well be imagined.

The villain had outwitted them in the slickest manner possible.

Frank Reade, Jr., was the first to recover.

"Get aboard!" he shouted. "We must catch the rascal. If we don't, then our game is up!"

All leaped aboard.

The Cycle was sent forward at top speed.

Around the pyramids it raced.

But the wily Ahmed Bey and his companions had eluded them.

Hours were spent in the search, but not a trace of them could be found.

Frank Reade, Jr., was bitterly disappointed at the result.

He had counted much upon the advantage of having Ahmed Bey as a hostage.

By this means he had hoped to recover Ethel.

As it was, there seemed no other way but to make a run for the hills and engage in a battle with Cozia Hassan.

It was not going to be an easy matter to find the Arab abductors, either.

This he realized.

A conference with the others was held.

"I see no better way," agreed Professor Tait, "but to make a run for the hills. We must act quickly, too."

"Yes," agreed Eben Strong, "these Arabs have a great way of folding their tents and crawling away in the night."

"We will chase them across the Sahara!" declared Frank, forcibly, "but we will rescue Ethel!"

Up to this time Barney had said nothing.

Now the Celt advanced.

He removed his cap respectfully, and said:

"Shure, Mishter Frank, an' wud yez listen to a worrud I might have to say?"

"Certainly," replied Frank, readily. "What is it, Barney?"

"On me worrud av honor I don't belave yez are doing right."

This excited the curiosity of all.

"Why not, Barney?" asked Frank.

"Shure, an' I belave yez ought ter foind thim rapscalions afore yez lave here."

"You mean Ahmed Bey and his companions?"

"Yis, sor."

"Very well. How shall we find them? We have made arch."

"Shure, sor, there's wan place yez haven't looked in."

"Where is that?"

"Yez have a paper there which will tell ye. Shure, it's e opinion they're hidin' in about them pyramids."

He Barney had pointed to the Arab MS. which lay upon the table.

In an instant all saw the point.

It was strange that not one of them had thought of it before.

"Well, upon my word!" exclaimed Frank, in surprise. "You have better sense than any of us, Barney. That is a good idea."

It was a certain fact that Ahmed and his men were hiding about the pyramids somewhere.

It was impossible but that they might know of the existence of the treasure vaults and have sought refuge there.

Frank's mind was quickly made up now.

First of all, the pyramids must be searched.

He was not slow to organize the party.

It was decided that Bertrand Vaile should remain aboard the Cycle.

There was little danger of an attack upon it.

But to make things sure, Frank instructed Vaile how to charge the hull with electricity as a means of defense.

Then the party, armed to the teeth, started for the pyramids.

Frank consulted the plan carefully and read, in Arabic characters:

"On that side facing the rising sun, second step from the sands, find stone with square and compass. Press heavily inward."

The party proceeded to the east side of the pyramid.

Then Frank began to search for the marked stone.

In this he was quite successful.

After a search of only a few moments he gave an exclamation.

There was the mark of the square and compass upon one of the stones.

But it was fully two feet out of its place, and a cavity yawned beneath it.

Whether it had been displaced by Ahmed Bey, or accidentally, Frank had no means of knowing.

He followed the directions upon the plan, and by pushing more forcibly made the aperture wide.

All was darkness below.

Frank leaned over and tried to penetrate it.

But this was in vain.

However, he drew from his pocket a small battery, with wire and miniature electric light.

He put the battery in operation and then lowered the tiny globe.

An astounding sight was revealed below.

There had formerly been stone steps leading downward,

to a depth of fully fifty feet to the bottom of an immense pit.

But these had crumbled with age and weight.

They had fallen and lay in a heap below.

Upon them lay the mangled forms of Ahmed Bey and his companions.

The truth was apparent.

One after another they had crawled into the aperture as a hiding place and had fallen to their awful death at the bottom of the pit.

Frank Reade, Jr., was horrified.

"Bejabers, that was a bad thing fer thim!" averred Barney.

"I should say so!" cried Eben Strong. "From the frying-pan into the fire."

"A most awful thing!" commented Professor Tait.

What was to be done?

It was a fitting sepulcher for the Bedouins.

But now that the exploration of the pyramid had been begun, few wished to turn back.

"Bring a rope," said Frank.

Barney produced one.

It was lowered into the pit, and Frank proceeded to descend upon it.

By mutual agreement Professor Tait followed.

Strong and Barney were to remain above and give any signal of alarm.

Reaching the bottom of the pit the two explorers stepped over the dead bodies of the Bedouins.

With the electric light to show them the way, they entered a broad passage.

This led for a dozen feet into what seemed to be a wide and high roofed chamber.

Here a wonderful sight was revealed.

Upon either hand were huge Sphinxes, and statues of Egyptian gods carved out of stone.

They looked grim and sepulchral enough, but Frank turned from them to what seemed like a mighty sarcophagus in the centre of the chamber.

Closer inspection, however, revealed this as the receptacle for matter coming down through a shaft from above.

Frank mounted the side of the vast chest and threw the rays of the light into it.

An astounding sight met his gaze.

There was a mighty heap of coin.

Bushels and even tons of money in coin filled the sarcophagus.

The presence of this in the place was easily explained.

Perhaps for several centuries the Egyptian people had passed the famous pyramid and paid tribute to their gods by dropping coins through a small crevice above which had transferred them through a shaft to the sarcophagus.

Of course, the coin there piled up represented a vast fortune.

The possessor of so much in the days of the Ptolemys would have been a veritable Croesus.

But unfortunately it was mainly the poor people who had paid a propitiating fee to Isis and Osiris.

The coins were mostly copper, and, of course, practically valueless save as curios.

There were some of gold and silver, but they were few.

Frank realized that it would never pay to handle all that vast mass over to get the valuable coins.

Professor Tait agreed with him.

Yet there was a mighty fascination in looking over the pile of money.

The scientist took several of the pieces for preservation and reference.

The treasure of the Twin Pyramids had proved a sell. Back to the rope the two explorers went.

They were drawn up into the open air by Barney and Strong.

Their story was quickly told.

Barney was much disappointed, and muttered:

"Bad cess to the omadhouns, why did they put away so much money, an' ivery bit in copper, too?"

"All is not gold that glitters," laughed Frank. "It is a good lesson for us all. It teaches us the folly of avarice."

The party returned to the Cycle.

The fate of Ahmed Bey was discussed.

There was now plainly no way but to go ahead and trust to luck.

The Cycle was at once headed for the distant hills.

Night was at hand.

But the Cycle ran on with the searchlight to guide the way.

With the coming of another dawn the machine was in the hills.

Valleys were traversed, uplands crossed, but not a visible trace of human life was found.

If Cozia Hassan's band was encamped here, where was the camp?

At length Frank brought the Cycle to a halt.

A high hill was near by.

He proposed to climb it, and, if possible, get a correct idea of the country beyond and about them.

With this purpose in view Frank had started to descend the steps when a startling thing occurred.

A rifle bullet cut a hole through the brim of his cap.

At the same moment loud shouts filled the air and a party of mounted Bedouins dashed from a clump of palms near.

They came straight for the Cycle and it was certain that they meant an attack.

Frank leaped back into the cabin.

Quick as a flash he sprang into the gun-room.

He threw a projectile into the breech of gun number two and sighted it.

There was a shock and a silent discharge. This, however, was followed by a terrific roar as the projectile struck the ground in front of the Bedouins.

Then up into the air rose a column of sand, sixty feet in height.

It fell with a terrible roar, and half of the Bedouins were buried under it.

The others, unable to stop their horses, came dashing through.

Straight for the Cycle they came like a thunderbolt.

## CHAPTER IX.

### AN UNFORTUNATE BETRAYAL.

Pomp's sensations at discovery of the Arab encampment were of a varied sort.

For some time the darky hardly knew how to act, but remained sitting upon his horse like a statue.

"Golly!" he muttered, "here am a diskivery! I only wish Marse Frank was yer jist now."

But he was not.

Nor did Pomp know where he was.

The darky could not convey word to him, even had he desired; but he was not long idle.

Pomp was a shrewd darky.

His long association with Frank Reade, Jr., had resulted in the partial development of an inventive faculty of his own.

He was not long in doubt as to a plan of action.

"I done fink dis am de place where dey hab brought Missy Ethel," he declared. "I jes' reckon I fin' out all about dat, an' mebbe dis chile kin sabe her fo' suah."

Pomp dismounted and tied his horse in a thick clump of palm scrub near.

Then he proceeded to reconnoitre and take a nearer view of the camp.

He crept cautiously along in the verge of the palms.

He could see large bodies of the Arabs below.

They were engaged in various pursuits.

Some were in knots talking, others were lounging about, many were trading horses or racing, but none seemed at work.

The darky watched them a long while.

Among the varicolored tents there was one which was larger and more splendid than the rest.

Suddenly there emerged from this a tall Arab, richly dressed.

Pomp at once guessed correctly that this was the leader of the tribe, Cozia Hassan.

The darky located the tent and its position carefully.

He had no doubt but that Ethel was confined in this.

It was near the verge of a high cliff.

One angle of the tent came almost in contact with this.

Pomp carefully studied the situation, and then started for the cliff.

It required a long detour, but after much hard climbing he reached it.

It was an exposed place, but by crawling upon his stomach, like a snake, Pomp reached the spot unobserved.

He crawled to the very edge of the cliff.

Drawing a sharp knife, he leaned over the edge of the cliff and cut a slit in the tent cloth.

It enabled him to see that part of the tent directly beneath.

And as he gazed down into the interior he received a thrilling shock.

Rich rugs and articles of Ottoman furniture were seen.

Half reclining upon a rich divan was a slender young girl.

What was more, her gaze had been turned upward, and she had chanced to see the slit cut in the tent.

The black face appearing at this had, for a moment alarmed her, and she gave a little cry of terror.

But Pomp, who at once recognized her as Ethel Tait, whispered hoarsely and eagerly:

"Sho dar, honey! Don' yo' be one lily bit 'fraid. I'se only Pomp,"

In an instant Ethel regained her equanimity.

She made reply, in an eager whisper:

"You are a friend?"

"Yes, missy."

"And you have come to save me?"

"I jes' hab dat!"

"But—who are you?"

"I'se Pomp, miss—only brack Pomp. Yo' needn't ter be afraid."

Ethel's breath was quick and short.

"Heaven be praised!" she gasped. "It is too good news! Oh, tell me, do you come from my father?"

"Yes, missy."

"Where is he?"

"I done told you, missy."

And with this Pomp told the whole story of the falling in of the exploring party with the Cycle.

Ethel listened with deepest interest.

When Pomp had finished she said, with much excitement:

"Ah, but you cannot know how risky this all is. If you were to be caught by Hassan or his men it would be your death."

Pomp grinned.

"I jes' don' mean to be caught, missy!" he said.

"But I don't see how you ever got here in the first place."

"I jes' cum right along."

"This camp is well guarded and the Bedouins are very keen."

"A'right, missy, I done fink I fool 'em yit."

Ethel walked up and down the tent in an excited frame of mind.

She could hardly believe her senses that deliverance was so near at hand.

It seemed to her as if it could not possibly succeed.

Something must, would happen to spoil the plan.

"What is your plan for my escape, Pomp?" she asked.

"I'se jes' gwine fo' to wait, missy, until it gits dark 'nuff, den I'se gwine fo' to come right yer an' lower a rope down to yo'; I kin pull yo' up here by making dis hole larger, an' den we kin git away fo' suah, fo' I has a horse all ready."

"And—do you know where my father is now?"

"I done fink we kin fin' him."

"Thank God! Oh, you shall be well rewarded, sir. Now I beg of you to take no more chances. Your position here is dangerous, as some one may come in."

"All right, missy. Yo' wait till aftah dark."

Pomp pinned the slit together carefully and then left the spot.

He crawled back to the cover of the palms.

Then he started back to the spot where he had left his horse.

But a thrilling discovery was in store for him.

As he drew nearer the spot he was horrified to see a number of Bedouins there.

One of them had his horse by the bridle, and the others were making an examination of the saddle.

Pomp's hair almost stood on end.

"Golly!" he gasped. "Dis chile am done spoiled dis time. Dey hab got dat horse fo' suah!"

Indeed, it began to look as if they meant to have Pomp, too, for suddenly the darky heard a sharp cry in his rear.

He turned his head and beheld an appalling sight.

Two Bedouins were approaching him, full tilt.

He was discovered.

It was a desperate situation.

For a moment he believed that his end had come.

Then he made action.

Quick as a flash he drew his revolver and fired.

One of the Bedouins fell.

A cry went up, echoed by a hundred hoarse throats.

Bedouins seemed to spring up from everywhere. The situation was thrilling.

Bullets were flying about him, but Pomp was on his way like a flash, through a pass between the hills.

The darky was a swift runner.

It was easy for him to distance his savage pursuers.

Finally all sounds of pursuit died out in his rear and he halted from sheer exhaustion.

To say that Pomp was discomfited would be a mild term. He was overwhelmed with utter disappointment.

He had believed himself in a certain position to effect the rescue of Ethel Tait.

But now a new phase had arisen and the tables were completely turned.

Pomp groaned in his bitterness of spirit.

What was to be done?

To attempt to return to the spot he had left would seem foolhardy.

It would but be to risk capture by the Bedouins.

Certainly it would not do to attempt Ethel's rescue that night.

Satisfied of this, Pomp now began to wander about at random.

There was half a hope in his heart that he would fall in with the Cycle.

He was getting hungry again, and would have given much for a good square meal.

He recalled his far-away home in Readestown, and heartily wished himself there.

Certainly there was no comfort for him just now in this God-forsaken, out-of-the-way part of the world.

Soon darkness began to settle down, thick and fast.

Pomp was completely exhausted, and seeing a clump of palms just ahead, ventured to make for it.

He would endeavor to find a comfortable place to sleep and thus gain much-needed rest.

There was no time now to make plans for the future. He would rest a few days and keep a good watch for the Bedouins.

The fruit of the date palm and other species would furnish subsistence.

Perhaps he might yet be able to rescue Ethel.

Thus reasoning, Pomp found a good place in the sand at the foot of a tall palm and went to sleep.

The darky was very tired and slept soundly.

How long this was he never knew.

But he was awakened in a very strange and terrifying manner.

In his dreams there came to him the conviction that he was beneath a heavy lump of ice, which was slowly bearing down upon his face and threatened to crush him.

Cold winds of bitter fierceness swept over his face also.

This dream took the form of a veritable nightmare.

He was indeed unable to move hand or foot.

In an agony he made a spasmodic effort and hurled the rushing block of ice aside.

In that effort he awoke.

In a dazed state for a moment he saw flashing balls of fire in the gloom and heard snarling cries.

It instantly aroused him.

Like a flash the realization came over him. He was in the midst of a drove of jackals, which now, as he sprang up, retreated, snarling and yelping.

He had woke up just in the nick of time.

The beasts would have torn him in shreds a moment later.

Pomp was terrified and let out a yell. Jackals will never attack a live man, and they now fled in dismay.

But at that moment a great flood of light burst all around Pomp. It was as if the sun had suddenly put in an appearance and banished the darkness.

## CHAPTER X.

### A DISAPPEARANCE.

The Bedouins surviving the sand pillar raised by the electric projectile came straight on for the Cycle.

Frank had thrown another projectile into the breech of the gun.

He could easily have fired again.

But he did not do so.

His admiration for the daring of the Bedouins was too great. He knew that they could do no harm to the Cycle at that moment, so he was not disposed to useless slaughter.

On came the Bedouins with headlong speed.

Their horses even collided with the Cycle before they could be reined up.

Four of them flung themselves from their saddles and sprang upon the rear platform.

They tried to force in the cabin door.

But they might as well have spared themselves the effort. They were unable to do so.

Frank quickly touched the electric key which charged the hull of the Cycle.

The result was peculiar.

Every Bedouin was lifted as if by unseen giant hands and thrown from the platform.

Barney and the others would now have shot them.

But Frank interfered.

“Don’t do that!” he cried. “I would rather you would not!”

Then the young inventor started the Cycle ahead.

This left the defeated and demoralized Bedouins behind.

They did not attempt to follow the Cycle further.

Soon they were out of sight, and the Cycle was spinning away upon a new course.

All the rest of that day the search of the hills was kept up.

At length thick darkness settled down over the landscape.

The Cycle was brought up near a clump of palms and preparations made for a camp.

Finally the lights were put out so as not to attract the attention of the foe, and all sat out on the platform enjoying the cool evening air.

It was quite a late hour when a tumult came from the palm grove near.

There was a human yell, and unmistakably the yelping of jackals.

At once Frank Reade, Jr., sprang up.

“What is that?” he exclaimed.

“Jackals,” said Tait.

“What are they doing?”

“I don’t know. I thought I heard a human voice.”

“So did I.”

Frank at once sprang to the searchlight.

It was but a moment’s work to pull the slide and press the key.

In an instant a flood of light made the vicinity as plain as day.

Beyond the verge of this into the gloom the jackals were retreating.

But right at the foot of a tall palm stood a man.

He had apparently aroused from slumber, and was stretching himself in a dazed fashion.

A great cry went up from those on board the Cycle. It was an easy matter to recognize him.

He was no other than the missing black servitor.

"Pomp!" shouted Frank Reade, Jr. "Hurrah! This is indeed luck!"

The darky was for a moment dazzled by the radiance of the light.

It did not take him long, however, to comprehend its origin.

He recognized it at once as emanating from the search-light of the Cycle.

A wild yell of joy escaped his lips and he started for the Cycle.

"Marse Frank! Bress de Lor'! Am dat yo' fo' suah?" he shouted.

Frank rushed out upon the platform and when Pomp came up he fairly embraced his master in his great joy.

But Barney now came rushing forward, and the scene was really affecting.

The two faithful fellows embraced each other in the wildest of joy.

Their meeting was a happy one.

It was some while before all was quite enough to enable Pomp to give his story.

All listened to it with the most intense interest.

The announcement that the Bedouin camp was but a short distance away was a startling one.

Professor Tait grasped Pomp's hand.

"And you actually talked with my darling child?" he asked.

"Yes, sah," replied Pomp, "an' I done fought I was dead suah to hab her rescued long ago' dis."

"May God be praised!" cried the delighted scientist. "We shall yet save her, Mr. Reade."

Frank smiled grimly.

"We will," he replied.

Of course, the professor was anxious to locate the camp that night.

But Pomp was unable to tell just where it was in the darkness, so it was decided to wait for daylight.

This seemed an eternity in coming.

There was little sleep on board the Cycle for the rest of the night.

But Pomp feasted heartily, for he was desperately hungry. At length light broke in the east.

As soon as objects about became distinguishable, Pomp entered the pilot-house with Frank Reade, Jr.

As near as the darky could remember, he directed the course.

At length they entered the little pass between the hills.

In a few moments they could see the whole Bedouin encampment.

Thus far not a Bedouin had been seen.

The Cycle boldly emerged from the pass.

Frank had made up his mind to boldly advance upon the encampment, and bring the Bedouins to terms.

Pomp was in the pilot-house, eagerly looking for the gaudy tents.

But they did not appear.

Smoke was seen rising.

This seemed to be smoke from the camp-fire. Every moment the view became broader.

Then a most thrilling sight was revealed to all.

Certainly there was the spot where the huge encampment had been.

But not a tent was left to view.

Every one had disappeared.

In accordance with the proverbial saying, the Arabs had one and all folded their tents and stolen away.

The Cycle ran out upon the camp-ground.

The disappointment of the pursuing party cannot be expressed in words.

Pomp indicated the spot where the pavilion had stood.

There was the overhanging cliff where he had reclined and conversed with Ethel through the slit.

But the fair captive was gone.

Whither? This was the query.

There was a broad trail leading away toward the desert. Frank would have headed the Cycle in that direction but for an object that just then caught his gaze.

It was nothing more nor less than a Bedouin reclining beneath the shadow of a cliff.

It needed but a glance to show that illness had prevented his accompanying his companions.

At once an idea suggested itself to Frank.

He left the Cycle and approached the fellow.

At once the Arab, in tremulous tones, began to call upon Allah and beg for his life.

Frank assumed a stern expression, and said, in the Turkish tongue:

"See here, you dog, your life is in my power!"

"Spare me, Effendi!" pleaded the affrighted Bedouin.

"Spare me, in the name of Allah!"

"Will you answer me truthfully if I spare your life?"

"What will Effendi ask?"

"Now, if you do not answer me truthfully you shall die!"

"Aye, master!"

"Where has the great sheik gone with his people?"

At once the Bedouin pointed far out towards the desert, saying:

"To Cairo, Effendi. There he will do homage to the sultan."

"That is a lie, you scoundrel!" said Frank, sternly. "Tell me the truth, or you die this moment!"

The affrighted Turk quivered like an aspen.

"I swear it by the beard of the prophet!" he declared. And this was all that Frank could get out of him.

And the young inventor was persuaded to accept it as the truth.

It was by no means improbable that the Sheik Cozia Hassan, grown rich in his desert plundering, had gone to sue for the patronage of the sultan.

He would be sure to get this by paying a sufficient amount of tribute.

Frank saw that the only way was to give chase.

The caravan had got a good start.

But their progress must necessarily be slow compared with that of the Cycle.

The young inventor was determined to chase them even if it was to the gates of Cairo itself.

The sultan, nor no other power should prevent his rescuing the young girl so fiendishly held captive.

A flask of whisky was given the sick Bedouin, and then the Cycle was headed for the open desert.

It was easy enough getting out of the hills.

And when the desert was reached there was a broad trail leading across the desert.

"We will soon overtake them," said Frank, confidently. But hindrances were to arise of which he little dreamed.

The Cycle ran on for some while, when suddenly the attention of all was claimed by a peculiar state of the atmosphere.

It presented that same strange appearance that Pomp had noticed just before the fearful sand storm.

Up to the zenith a strange yellow cloud was reaching.

Around the horizon the haze was intense, and seemed drawing in closer upon the desert waste.

That the dreaded simoon was again about to break over the desert was certain.

Those on board the Cycle watched it with no little apprehension.

Pomp, who knew what a terrible thing it was from experience, shrugged his shoulders and said:

"I done tol' yo' it am a bery bad fing. I jes' reckon dat am gwine to hab a heap of trubble."

Indeed, Frank was inclined to agree with the darky.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE QUICKSAND.

They had run so far out upon the desert that to return to the hills would be out of the question.

Frank Reade, Jr., regarded the coming of the simoon with apprehension.

Besides the danger of suffocation in the cloud of heated air which always accompanied it, there was the depressing fact that the trail of the Bedouins would be lost.

This meant an uncertain and random chase across the desert for the Arabs.

In this case it was possible that years might be consumed in the search.

The mighty Sahara is a vast track and the Bedouin tribes are constantly moving.

The young inventor reflected upon all this and his spirits were somewhat depressed.

But in view of the contingency in front of them he was compelled to dispel all other thoughts from his mind.

Higher rose the cloud to the very zenith.

Then came the usual accompaniments to the simoon.

There was a dull, moaning sound in the air.

Whiffs of wind sent clouds of dust whirling skyward.

Then, with a distant bellow like an angry lion the storm-cloud was seen approaching at lightning speed across the desert.

Frank headed the Cycle for it and waited.

The next moment the simoon struck the machine.

For a moment it seemed as if the stanch invention was going all to pieces.

It was in the very heart of a mighty whirling mountain of sand.

The grinding of the revolving sands against the steel sides of the Cycle made a thunderous din.

Nothing could be seen by those aboard.

All was dark as could be, and every man clung to some object that was stationary.

All were gasping for breath.

For a time it really seemed as if they were bound to suffocate.

How long the uproar lasted they could not tell.

It really was but a brief time, yet it seemed a century. Death seemed a certainty.

But suddenly the din began to lessen. Frank Reade, Jr., sprang to the lever and threw it wide open.

The light was coming back into the Cycle, but he turned on the electric lights.

The dynamos buzzed, but the Cycle did not move.

It was easy to guess why.

Its wheels were buried in sand, thus effectually clogging them. It could not move a peg.

Frank shut off the dynamos and turned to Tait, who was very pale.

"Is the machine ruined?" asked the professor.

"By no means!" replied Frank. "The wheels are clogged."

An expression of relief crossed the face of the scientist.

"Then we have simply to dig her out as soon as the storm is over?"

"That is all."

"Thank God that it is no worse!"

Quickly now the storm died out.

It vanished almost as quickly as it had come.

But the hot, stifling air still remained, and the sun beat down pitilessly upon the desert.

As soon as possible Frank forced open the outer cabin door.

The Cycle was in a literal sand bank.

Its platform and decks were heaped with sand.

Pushing the door open Frank went out.

It required but a brief glance for him to see what it was necessary to do.

All of the sand must be removed before the Cycle could proceed.

The machinery was clogged with the fine particles, and it would require much hard work to clean it.

Barney and Pomp suddenly found themselves in business.

It was no light job to remove the accumulated sand.

Shovels and brooms were employed, and all went to work.

It actually required hours of patient toil to dig the Cycle out of its clinging bed.

But at length this was done, and the machinery cleaned and oiled.

Once more the machine ran out upon the plain and was ready to proceed on the journey.

But the task had required hours of patient toil, and darkness was again at hand.

There was no other way, but to wait for another day.

Of course, every moment was precious, and gave the Bedouins so much more opportunity to increase the distance between them.

But as the storm had obliterated the trail there was no other way.

Professor Tait was in a very distressed state of mind.

He paced the platform of the Cycle, muttering:

"My God, she is lost to me! My darling Ethel is lost!"

"Do not say that!" cried Frank, hopefully. "We have not done yet. Fortune may still abide with us."

"Ah, but it is no light matter to find the villainous abductors in all this trackless waste."

"That is very true. Yet chance may aid us."

"That is not encouraging."

"Yet if we lose courage we are defeated, anyhow."

"True," agreed Tait. "I shall abide by your advice, Frank, and rest in hope."

"I feel that we shall be successful," declared the young inventor. "At least, we will never abandon the quest."

There were tears in the professor's eyes as he gripped Frank's hand.

"God bless you!" he cried. "I owe much to you, Frank. I can never repay you for all this."

"Pay I do not want," replied the young inventor. "The consciousness of having done right is enough."

"God bless you!"

Tait turned away, too full of emotion for utterance.

That was a long, weary night in the great Sahara.

But at length daylight came.

With the first light of dawn Frank sent the Cycle on its way across the desert.

The young inventor had been doing some solid thinking. He reflected that it was not at all unlikely that Cozia Hassan and his people had indeed set out for Cairo.

It was possible that the robber sheik, having enriched himself in his lawless, career, intended to retire from it and buy a title from the sultan.

Money was the ruling power in the Ottoman Empire and its provinces.

No matter how adroit a scoundrel a man has been, he can, with gold, purchase a title from the sultan and with impunity defy the law.

But after serious reflection Frank decided not to go in the direction of Cairo.

It occurred to him that Hassan, as a more likely thing would strike for the lower edge of the desert, nearer the interior of Africa.

Here there were numberless thriving cities where he would be welcomed and at once made a prince.

This was directly across the Sahara and meant a long journey of many hundred miles.

But Frank knew that the Cycle was good for it.

He at once headed for the southern verge of the desert. He announced his purpose to the professor, who agreed with him.

"You are right, Frank," he declared. "We will live or die by that attempt, anyway."

So this settled the matter.

For two days the Cycle ran at full speed.

The passengers did not suffer for lack of water or food, for plenty was stored aboard the machine.

All day long some one would be kept on guard, with a powerful glass scanning the horizon.

But still that same dreary waste of sand.

Not a living thing was seen save an occasional oasis.

On and on the Cycle went.

Four days passed in the great chase across the desert.

The dynamos had been taxed to their utmost capacity.

That was a fearful swift drive over the cheerless waste.

The everlasting sameness had a depressing effect upon the spirits of all.

It seemed as if they would never again see green fields and luxuriant vegetation.

All this while no incident worthy of note occurred.

Then a frightful catastrophe overtook the party.

It came near breaking the courage of all and ruining the expedition.

The Cycle was going at top speed, when suddenly Barney, who was in the pilot-house, saw a queer, jelly-like commotion of the sands ahead.

The astute Irishman in an instant guessed the truth.

It was a mighty quicksand, sufficient in extent to at once and forever bury the Cycle.

The Irishman let out a terrified yell, closed the electric lever and applied the brakes.

At the same moment he brought the wheel around.

The Cycle did not plunge into the heart of the quicksand.

Barney had been just in time to avert this.

But it did run along the edge, and came to a jarring stop, with both wheels upon one side, sunk in the soft mass.

And there it rested half upon its side.

Every one one board was thrown from his feet.

Regaining his poise, Frank rushed into the pilot-house.

Barney was just picking himself up from a corner where he had been hurled.

"Begorra, Misther Frank, it's moighty nigh being buried alive we wor!" declared the Celt, excitedly.

"What have we struck?"

"A quicksand, sor!"

A brief examination revealed the truth to Frank.

"My boy," he said, hoarsely, "you have saved our lives. It was a brave act on your part!"

"Bejabers, I did the best I could," averred Barney.

Everybody crowded about the Celt, in grateful acknowledgments.

But the position of the Cycle was a most dangerous one. It was apt to capsize into the sands at any moment.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE RESCUE.

The position of the Cycle was indeed most critical.

Only prompt action would save it from being wholly engulfed in the sands.

Frank leaped out upon the solid ground and examined the machinery.

The cogs and levers bore deep in the soil and could not be worked.

Every moment the machine was settling.

The exigency called for active measures.

"Bring shovels, quick!" he shouted.

Barney and Pomp came rushing out with them.

In a few moments they had excavated beneath the revolving cogs, and the machinery was able to run.

Then Frank veered the wheel sharply around.

Next a stout rope was attached to the ram of the Cycle.

Far out on the sound plain it was carried, and Professor Tait, Barney, and Pomp, and Vaile, and Strong, put their weight upon it.

Frank remained in the pilot-house.

The weight of the five men actually veered the bow of the Cycle about.

Then the machinery set the wheels in motion, their tires caught in the solid soil and the Cycle came slowly but surely out of the quicksand.

A few moments later she was once more on terra firma.

A wild cheer went up from the party.

It was a close call, but a miss is as good as a mile, and the spirits of all revived.

The machinery was somewhat clogged by the quicksands, but Barney and Pomp soon cleaned it.

The Cycle was once more ready for duty.

The extent of the quicksand was now noted.

It covered several acres.

It was most deceptive in appearance and only Barney's quick wit had saved the lives of all.

Doubtless many a desert traveler and perhaps whole caravans lay at the bottom of that awful sink.

It was a frightful thing to think of and all turned shuddering away.

The Cycle proceeded cautiously until well away from the vicinity of the sands.

Then once more speed was resumed.

The next day a wonderful sight burst upon the view of all.

A long, dark line first showed along the horizon. This later resolved itself into waving palms and green verdure.

The southern edge of the desert was reached.

The spires, minarets and domes of a city even could be seen.

Toward this the Cycle was at once headed.

As the machine drew nearer quite a large body of horsemen were seen.

They fled at sight of the Cycle.

Indeed all people outside the gates of the oriental town fled behind them and they were closed.

The walls of the city bristled with armed men.

It was evident that the Cycle was regarded as an invader and an enemy.

Frank Reade, Jr., smiled, and making sure that no cannon were mounted upon the walls, ran the Cycle up to the very gates of the city.

It was a quaint, old-fashioned place, some of the buildings no doubt antedating the Christian era.

The Cycle came to a halt. Then Frank appeared on the platform and hailed the warden in the Turkish tongue.

But this brought no reply.

Frank then tried Arabic, of which he had a slight knowledge.

A reply at once came back.

"We are friends," declared the young inventor. "We do not come to pillage your city, but to treat with you."

"We have had such promises made us before!" replied the warden.

"We cannot pay tribute," replied Frank. "We are not Bedouins. We are Americans and friends."

The Sahara people, however, knew nothing of America, and were yet disposed to be distrustful.

"What seek you in this place with your wonderful chariot, oh, great king?" was the next query.

"We are searching for Cozia Hassan and his robber band. Do you know him?"

A cry of alarm went up from the Sahara people.

"Well, we know him for a monster. Twice has he destroyed our crops, robbed us, and sold our best young men into slavery."

"Then believe me," cried Frank, "I have come to give him punishment. I am your friend."

This seemed to reassure the Sahara people.

Indeed, they might have next opened the gates, but at this moment a strange thing happened.

From the other side of the city an uproar went up. Then the voice of the warden came down again.

"You say you are our friend. Now you may prove it. Cozia Hassan and his crew are at our southern gates and trying to overcome our guard!"

This announcement created the most intense of excitement aboard the Cycle.

Could they believe their senses? A great cheer went up.

"Now is our chance!" cried Frank, excitedly. "Get to your posts, every man! We have struck luck!"

The Cycle went tearing around the walled city like a meteor.

It was plain that Hassan had crossed the Sahara and attacked the city in its rear.

His purpose no doubt was to obtain provisions for his men.

The Cycle suddenly burst upon the thrilling scene.

There were the Bedouins, fully a thousand strong, trying to force an entrance to the Sahara city.

That they would succeed there was little doubt.

But Frank Reade, Jr., appeared on the scene just in the nick of time.

The young inventor saw the train of the robber band just in the forest to the south.

To cut it off from the armed band was the first move to make.

The Cycle came upon the scene so unexpectedly that the Bedouins were taken by surprise.

At once they attempted to return to their train, but Frank was at the electric gun.

Barney was at the wheel.

Frank sighted the gun and sent a projectile crashing into the midst of the Bedouins.

The result was fearful.

The air was filled with flying bodies, and many were buried beneath a great mound of sand.

Cozia Hassan, mounted upon a powerful horse, was trying to urge them on.

But the Bedouins were terror-struck by the deadly work of the projectile.

Another and another Frank sent crashing among them.

It was useless for them to stand before such an engine of destruction.

The result was that all broke and fled in all directions. Frank was determined to give them a rich lesson.

So he continued to fire, sending death after the wretches in all directions.

Then, after completely scattering the band, he headed for the train of horses.

The party in charge of these incontinently fled.

Everything was left behind, and from a gaily decked litter, between two horses, a light feminine form sprang.

It was Ethel herself, and she started for the Cycle with outstretched arms.

A Bedouin endeavored to get in her path, but a bullet from Barney's rifle settled his case.

The Cycle came to a stop.

The cabin door was thrown open and Professor Tait sprang out.

In another moment he had his beloved child in his arms. That was a joyful meeting.

All fairly wept with joy.

Ethel was taken aboard the Cycle, and well cared for.

All the troubles of the explorers seemed over.

They no longer had fear of the Bedouins, or aught else, for safely aboard the Cycle, what could harm them?

The inhabitants of the Sahara City had beheld the repulse of Cozia Hassan's gang with literal wonderment.

They now came out timidly, and offered to pay tribute, if the Americans would spare their city.

Frank laughed good-naturedly at this and replied:

"I have not the slightest intention of doing you harm. I do not want any tribute from you."

This overjoyed the Arab people.

The Americans were made welcome to the city and a grand fete prepared.

They were treated like princes.

Professor Tait and the two young students made wonderful progress in their archaological researches.

Much of value was unearthed, much learned of the early history of the land which had presumably once been the rich kingdom of the Queen of Sheba of Solomon's time.

Indeed they were loth to leave this wide field.

But after a couple of weeks spent with the simple people of the South Sahara, it was decided to go at once to Cairo and get a steamer home, via the Suez Canal.

Accordingly the start was made.

The run across the desert was made without special incident.

Cairo was finally reached.

Here they were under the protection of the sultan, and passed a few weeks most pleasantly.

Then the city of oriental splendor, of rich bazaars and wondrous shops was left behind.

A swift run was made to Port Said.

Here passage was secured upon an American steamer for New York, via Gibraltar and Liverpool.

Arrangements were made to take the Cycle aboard and carry it straight to New York.

The captain of the Nevada, which was the name of the steamer, agreed to this.

A scheme was proposed by Tait and the others to return home by way of Sicily, Naples and the continent, going to Paris, London, and then to the United States.

Captain Jones agreed to stop at Sicily and land them. This completed the programme.

Frank and Barney and Pomp were ready to fall in with this plan.

It would afford them diversion and shorten the long, tedious sea voyage.

For this reason the young inventor decided to adopt it.

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### WHICH IS THE END.

The great chase across the Sahara was ended.

Truly, it was a wonderful feat which Frank Reade, Jr., had accomplished with his wonderful Cycle.

The scientists were profuse in their gratitude.

"Just think of it!" exclaimed the enraptured Tait, "but for Mr. Reade we should never have seen Ethel again. We alone could never have rescued her!"

"I am very glad to have been able to do it," replied Frank.

Port Said was left behind, and the Nevada stood out into the Mediterranean.

It was a beautiful sail up the sea to Sicily.

Here the party disembarked, and the Nevada, with the Cycle on board, went on its way.

Altogether the trip had been a complete success.

Frank and Barney and Pomp had found what they had come for, and this was wild adventure.

Professor Tait and his companions had made valuable research and found many rare specimens.

Their fame would be assured upon their return to the United States.

"I shall travel six months and lecture," declared Tait. Then he turned to Frank.

"By the way!"

"Well?" said the young inventor.

"What will you do with the Cycle when you get home?"

"I shall rest a while and then take another trip."

"Would you accept a proposal from me?"

"What?"

"I am anxious to explore a deep wilderness west of the Rockies. If you will go with me I will pay any price or do you any favor!"

"I will entertain your proposition," said Frank, "but I would not accept pay."

At this moment Bertrand Vaile and Ethel approached. They were hand in hand, and both blushing deeply.

"While you are gone upon that expedition we will remain at home and take care of the house, father," said Ethel.

"What?" exclaimed the astounded scientist.

"Yes," said Vaile, manfully, "for we have decided to unite our fortunes and humbly ask your blessing."

The trip across the continent of Europe was pleasant.

One day all set sail from Liverpool.

They finally landed in New York.

Frank and the professor went down to look up the Nevada and to see about the unloading of the Cycle.

They found the office and made inquiry, but were met with astounding intelligence.

"The Nevada foundered at sea with all on board, sir. Your goods will never get here."

There was no disputing the statement. The appalling realization was upon them that the Cycle was lost.

"Then our trip beyond the Rockies is up!" gasped Professor Tait.

Frank took his loss philosophically. He inquired about the insurance and then said:

"Tait, my friend, don't get despondent. It may come yet. Just as soon as I get back to Readestown I shall start upon an invention which shall eclipse the Cycle."

#### THE END.

Read "SIX WEEKS IN THE CLOUDS; OR, FRANK READE, JR.'S AIRSHIP, THE 'THUNDERBOLT,'" which will be the next number (19) of "Frank Reade Weekly Magazine."

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